



Unearthing the Crimes of Modern Bluebeards

"Bluebeard" Harvey
Doesn't Know How
Many Wives He Had.
Forty, He Says, May
Be the Correct Number.
The Above Line
Containing Forty
Women Indicates What
a Formidable Army
of Wives Harvey
Would Have to Face if
All of Them Were
Alive Today.



Charles Newton Harvey, Photographed in the Los Angeles County Hospital After Attempting to Commit Suicide.

By John Sheldon

SOMEWHERE around the year 1440 a much-married man named Giles de Rais was executed in France. He wasn't hanged or beheaded or shot or anything so sudden as that. The executioner slowly strangled him to death. It was a public execution and although the condemned culprit was a marshal of France and held title as the Marquis de Laval, he didn't seem to have any political pull or even one friend or sympathizer among the vast multitude that surrounded the place of execution.

Everybody seemed to think Giles de Rais ought to be executed slowly and as tortuously as nature permitted. They said he was a monster and unfit to live.

The marquis didn't look like a monster. He has been described as a rather handsome man of the dominating type, with strongly marked features and a heavy beard. Some women find this type of man particularly attractive. Others, of course, prefer the more gentlemanly and refined kind.

At least seven women were sufficiently attracted to the French marshal to become his wives. The first six wives dropped out of sight one after the other under circumstances which, in more enlightened times, would have called for an investigation. The first went on a journey and died; the second fell ill and was buried at night. The third met with a fatal accident, and so on until the marquis had led no less than six brides to the altar, only to find himself returned to the status of a bereaved widower shortly after each new wedding.

Then, nothing daunted, he married for the seventh time. There is no knowing what kind of fate would have fallen the seventh bride if she hadn't been blessed with a consuming curiosity to explore her husband's castle from turret to cellar. She explored and found the remains of the marquis's first six wives in the dungeon-like recesses beneath the castle walls.

Giles was arrested, and finally, under pressure, he confessed that he had a partiality for new wives; always taking the precaution, however, to strangle one wife before taking another.

Twenty Heads Found in One Room

Giles de Rais deserves a place in history as the original Bluebeard. Since his day, however, there have been other Bluebeards whose records of 20, 28 and even 40 wives make the 15th century French marshal's limit of seven wives seem quite insignificant.

No less than three modern Bluebeards have been unearthed within the past few weeks. Egypt stirred up the first one through the discovery of the heads of 20 women in a house in the town of Tanta, near Cairo. The heads have been identified as those of 20 visitors at the house of a remarkable criminal to whom the name of "Bluebeard" has since been applied. His real name is said to be Ben Husof. He is described in cable dispatches from Cairo as being a handsome adventurer with a flowing beard. At last reports he was still at large.

Husof, it appears, enticed women of good families to visit him at his home at Tanta on the pretext that he would introduce them to wealthy admirers with a view to marriage. None of the women ever returned home again. Husof's explanation was that they invariably went away with their prospective husbands and doubtless would be heard from later on.

After the disappearance of the 20th woman the authorities began to make inquiries about Husof. He immediately disappeared, leaving no trace behind him. When his home was broken into and searched the heads were found in an excellent state of preservation in sealed jars in a room which had evidently been set aside for that very purpose.

Inviting the women to his home Husof had

How the Original Fifteenth Century Monster Is Being Outrivalled by Three Recently Discovered Prototypes Who Have Been Marrying and Swindling Women— and Then Getting Rid of Them.



Bertha A. Goodrich of Spokane, Whose Body Was Found in Lake Washington, Near Seattle.

urged them to make themselves as attractive as possible and put on their most precious jewels and fineries. Once he had them in his grasp he took all their valuables and then murdered them, burning the headless bodies and preserving the heads. He had committed one such crime weekly until the inquiries by anxious relatives of the missing women led to the discovery of the wholesale murders.

Police and private detective agencies throughout the United States began a systematic search several weeks ago for W. H. Anderson, alias Capt. W. H. Alcott, of Spokane, Wash., former organizer for the National Grange, a farmers' society, who is alleged to have swindled women by methods similar to those employed by Charles Newton Harvey, the so-called Bluebeard who is under arrest in Los Angeles, Cal. Listed among the women whom Anderson is alleged to have defrauded, according to F. S. Alkus, manager of the Burns agency in Spokane, are Mrs. E. Scripser of Hattiesburg, Miss.; Mrs. H. L. Gordon and Mrs. Appie Winter of San Francisco.

Marrying Women with Bank Accounts

According to the police, Alcott became acquainted with women in different cities through matrimonial agencies. He would have his wife or wife-to-be introduce him at a bank, it is charged, cash checks for sums ranging from \$300 to \$1000, then disappear, turning up later under an alias somewhere else, and repeating his methods.

At first the authorities here thought Alcott might be Harvey himself, but a physical mark in the form of a lump on the former's neck has eliminated this theory.

Alkus, however, declared that Harvey undoubtedly was directing other swindlers by using matrimonial agencies and that Capt. Alcott, alias W. H. Anderson, and his alleged forgeries are probably known to him.

Harvey, as every newspaper reader is aware, has been breaking all modern matrimonial records. Just how many wives he has had during the past eight years it is not possible to say. Harvey doesn't pretend to remember all of them. He has confessed to 28, but that does not imply that the list is complete. When asked if it was not true that he has been united in the bonds of matrimony with at least forty women in various cities in the United States and Canada, the Los

Angeles Bluebeard admitted that such was possibly the case. But he insists that he did not murder more than five of his wives to get rid of them.

Charles Newton Harvey, also identified by various women who at one time or another had been deluded into marrying him, as J. B. Watson, Charles R. Huirt, Walter Andrews, Jack Hilton, Louis A. Hilton and James R. Huirt, has been styled the modern Bluebeard.

Harvey evidently employed the old-time "Bluebeard" method of marrying women for their money and then getting rid of them in one way or another in order to leave himself free to marry the next victim. Harvey is not handsome. The photograph reproduced on this page is proof of that. This photograph, it should be explained though, scarcely does him justice because it was taken in the county hospital where he was held a prisoner after attempting to commit suicide by cutting his throat following his arrest.

How Bluebeard Got His Name

But even at his best Harvey was by no means a beauty, and yet he had no difficulty in inducing women with money to accept his hand and heart. In his reported confession to the police he is said to have admitted that he first became obsessed with a desire to slay his "wives" four years ago. He said he had no motive at all and that there was no impulse to kill men or children or animals—just women.

Most of Harvey's missing "wives" disappeared from places in Southern California. Previous to that the self-confessed polygamist-murderer lived in Canada, where an effort is being made to trace his career. The man is undoubtedly insane and it is expected that he will spend the remainder of his days in a lunatic asylum.

The name "Bluebeard" can be traced to the writings of Charles Perrault in 1697. One of his characters was the Chevalier Raoul, a tyrant with a blue beard. His young wife, Fatima, was entrusted with the keys of his castle, with injunctions not to open one special room. The wife yielded to temptation, opened the forbidden door and walked in. She found the floor covered with the dead bodies of her husband's former wives.



Mrs. Elizabeth L. Williamson, Whom Harvey Is Reported to Have Married Under the Name of Huirt.

